

1027.2.19. Lh
A
PLAN OF POLICE:

EXHIBITING THE
CAUSES of the present Increase of the
POOR,

AND PROPOSING
A MODE for their future more æconomical
and effectual Relief and Support.

WITH
OBJECTIONS TO THE PLAN,
STATED AND ANSWERED;

AND
General OBSERVATIONS respecting the Expediency
and Practicability of the Whole.

L O N D O N:

Printed for G. and T. WILKIE, No. 71, St. Paul's Church-yard.

MDCCLXXXVI.

PLAN OF POLICE

CAUSES OF THE PRESENT INCREASE OF THE
POOR

A MODE FOR THEIR FUTURE MORE ECONOMICAL
AND EFFECTUAL RELIEF AND SUPPORT

OBJECTIONS TO THE PLAN

STATED AND ANSWERED

GENERAL OBSERVATIONS RELATIVE TO THE EXPEDIENCE
AND NECESSITY OF THE WORK

L O N D O N

Printed for G. and T. Warren, No. 11, St. Paul's Church-yard
MDCCCXXVI.

A
PLAN OF POLICE:

EXHIBITING THE
CAUSES of the present Increase of the
P O O R,

AND PROPOSING
A MODE for their future more economical
and effectual Relief and Support.

[Price Sixpence.]

PLAN OF POLICE:

EXHIBITING THE

CAUSES OF THE PRESENT INCREASE OF THE
POOR.

AND PROPOSING

A MODE FOR THEIR FUTURE MORE ECONOMICAL
AND EFFECTUAL RELIEF AND SUPPORT.

[Price Sixpence.]

(4)

PLAN OF POLICE,
&c. &c. &c.

THE Expences attending the Poor in *England and Wales*, when the Return was made to Parliament in the Year 1777, amounted to about 1,556,000*l.* besides the Money raised in many Parishes which made no Returns; and from the best Observations and Calculations which can be made of the Increase of the Poor's Rate, in different Parts of the Kingdom since that Time, it is apprehended the present Amount must be near Two Millions and a Half.

The real Causes of the Increase of the Poor seem to spring,

FIRST, From the great Number of Ale-houses, which gives them so many Opportunities

nities of wasting their Time, dissipating their Substance, and destroying their Morals.

SECONDLY, From the Imprisonment for Small Debts; as the Wife and Family, by that means losing their Support, have no other Resource but to the Parish.

THIRDLY, The Want of due Attention to young Children of the Poor, whose Parents are dissolute and abandoned.

To these may be added, the great Number of petty Thieves, Vagrants, and Beggars, which are permitted to infest our Streets and Highways.

As preliminary Measures for remedying these Evils, the following Propositions are suggested:

1st, A Reduction in the Number of Alehouses, suffering none to be licensed in the Country, but such as are really necessary for the Accommodation of Travellers, and restraining those in Cities and Towns within some proper Bounds.

[To facilitate such a Reduction, and relieve the Magistrates from the Difficulties they may lie under upon that Occasion, it is proposed that all those who have paid Duty for less than a certain given Number of Barrels of Ale within the last Year, shall be struck off, and an Increase of Stamps upon Licences laid on those which remain, sufficient to compensate the Revenue for the Reduction of the others.

That after such Reduction, the Justices should enquire into the Behaviour of those who had sold greater Quantities, and strike off such as shall appear to have been blameable in their Conduct; and add the like Number from the most reputable of those who shall have been struck off.]

2dly, A Reform in the Laws which permit Imprisonment for Small Debts, by limiting it to 10 *l.* or upwards, without adding the Costs of former Suits.

3dly, The inflicting Penalties on the Inhabitants of the Places where Felons, Thieves, and Beggars shall be harboured, at the Time they commit the Offences for which they shall be convicted.

And 4thly, The using proper Means for educating and employing the Infant Poor.

The Mode of Application of the Poor's Rates now in use, is liable to such a Variety of Frauds and Abuses, that there seems but little Prospect of regulating or correcting it *effectually* under the present System of Poor Laws.

Various Plans have at different Times been suggested and recommended, all of which, on being considered with Attention, have been found either impracticable or inadequate. From these circumstances, and an earnest Desire to promote an Object of so much Importance, the following Plan is produced, which it is

hoped, if approved, may be made effectual for the Purpose intended:

1. That the Administration should, in some measure, be taken out of the Hands of the Churchwardens and Overseers, by interposing the Assistance of other Persons, under the Power and Authority of certain Committees herein after described.

2. That the Money necessary to be raised for the Relief and Employment of the Poor, should arise from a County not a Parochial Aid, consisting of a Contribution from each Parish and Place, of the Sums which have been raised therein for the Use of the Poor, on a Medium of the last three Years; these Sums to form a General Fund for each County, from which the Poor shall be relieved, which will be the Means of putting an End to most of the Contests about Settlements and Removals.

3. And in order to ease Parishes, which may at first, from particular Circumstances, be heavy burdened, it is proposed that a Medium shall be drawn, in like Manner, at the End of every three Years, which will excite Oeconomy in those within every Parish who have the Execution of this Plan, that they may be relieved in their future Contributions.

4. It is also proposed, that for the Convenience of this Plan, and the Establishment of proper Committees, every County shall be divided
into

into convenient Districts, comprehending a proper Number of contiguous Parishes, with a View to circumscribe the Limits in which each distinct Committee shall act.

[*The Commissioners for fixing the Dis-* Commis-
tricts should be elected by Ballot, by Gen- sioners for
 tlemen of a given Description of Property, fixing the
 supposing 200*l. per Annum*, and consist of a Districts.
 proper Number of Gentlemen well qualified
 for the Business, living in different Parts of
 the County, according to the Extent of it;
 which Number should be specified in the
 Act. They should meet as soon as con-
 venient, and procure the Names of the se-
 veral Parishes, and also of the Townships,
 which maintain their Poor separately from
 the Parish at large; with a Description of
 their Situation and Contiguity.

To facilitate this, every Overseer of the Poor should be directed to send the Names and Descriptions of each to the Clerk of the Peace, to be laid before the Commissioners.

As soon as they have got the necessary local Information, they may form the Districts, by uniting so many Parishes and Places as shall appear most convenient; probably from Five to Ten Parishes, according to their Extent and Situation, having regard to the Business which the Act will require to be transacted by each Committee: That will induce them to take into each District a convenient central Town or Place, for the Residence of the Agent, and the Meeting of the Committee;

and also to insert within each District, such Places as are likely to produce Persons properly qualified for Committee Men.

When the Commissioners have had the District under their Consideration, and formed the Limits and Extent of it, they will probably be the fittest Persons to fix the Number of the Committee-men for each, and also the Salary for the Agent, under such Restrictions as may be thought fit to be made by the Act.]

5. The present Division of Parishes and Townships to be adhered to, with regard to the laying and collecting the Rates, and the keeping an Account of the Money expended within every such Parish or Place.

District
Committee.

6. That there shall be *District Committees*, consisting of a certain Number of Persons of a given Description of Landed or Personal Property, to be annually chosen by Ballot by Persons rated at *per Annum* to the Poor's Rate.

7. That the Number of Committee-men in each District shall be fixed by the Commissioners who are to set out the Districts.

8. That the Qualification for a District Committee-man shall be, the having an Estate in Fee of *per Annum*, of Personal Property of clear of Debts and Incumbrances, or the renting Lands of *per Annum*.

[The District Committee to meet the first Monday in every Month, at some convenient

venient Place near the Centre of the District, and at other Times occasionally, when necessary, either on Adjournment, or Notice of special Business from the District Agent.

To appoint Governors of Workhouses.

To hear Complaints from Paupers, after they have been before the Committee Agent.

To appoint, at their First Meeting, such Person as described in the Plan, to be their District Agent.

To fix a convenient House for the Reception and Accommodation of the Aged, Infirm, and Impotent Poor.

Also for young Children whilst of tender Years, till fit for Instructions, and proper to be removed to other Places under the Direction of the County Committee.

The Committee-men assigned for particular Parishes, to act with, and assist the District Agent as far as they can within their respective Parishes.]

9. That the District Committee shall at their First Meeting appoint a Chairman to preside at their Meeting, and One at least of their Members, to have the Care and Inspection of each Parish within the District which may be most convenient to such Member.

10. That it shall be the Duty of the District Committee to superintend the Government and Employment of the Poor, and particularly of the Infant Poor hereinafter described; and also to superintend the administering temporary and occasional Relief where necessary; and to see that proper Accommodations be provided
for

for the Sick, Infirm, and Impotent Poor which may be proper to continue within the District.

District Agent.

11. That every District Committee shall, for their own Ease and Convenience, and the more regular and expeditious Dispatch of Business, chuse annually by Ballot, a Person of distinguished Character, Ability, and Integrity, who shall be called a *District Agent*.

[The District Agent to have his Residence in some convenient Place near the Centre of the District.

A House should be provided for him, and also a proper Room in it for the Use of the Committee when they meet.

To call upon the Overseers for their Returns of the Amount of their Poor's Rates within each of the last Three Years, to be delivered upon Oath to the District Committee at their First Meeting.

To receive Complaints from Paupers who want Relief, and order it as he shall see occasion (with the Concurrence of the Committee-man assigned for that Parish, if present), after inquiring into the Circumstances of the Case, and making a Minute of the Proceedings in a Book to be kept for that Purpose, which Book should always be produced to the Committee at their Meetings. Those Minutes should be so methodized as to have the Proceedings respecting each Parish entered distinctly.

To calculate, after he has received Orders from the County Committee, the *Quota* which

which each Parish and Place is to contribute to the County Fund for the next Quarter, and to attend the County Committees.]

That the District Agent shall devote his whole Time and Attention to the Business of the Committee, and shall receive a Salary for his Trouble, not exceeding in the Pound of the Amount of the Medium Poor's Rates within that District, to be ascertained as aforesaid; and that he shall keep a particular and distinct Account of the Money raised, and Expences annually incurred, in each Parish or Place within his District.

12. That the *Overseers* of each Parish or *Overseers*, Place shall make Assessments, and collect quarterly the Sums which they shall be directed to raise by the District Committee; and shall return an Account thereof to the District Agent, and likewise to the County Treasurer, and pay the same to him, or such Person as he shall direct.

13. The Overseer to pay to the County Treasurer the Sum of £. on the Delivery of every Child, and of on the Delivery of every aged and infirm Person who shall be placed in Hospitals under the Care of the County Committee, in order to ascertain the Expences of each Parish with respect to their future Contribution.

14. And

14. And that they shall also pay the Expences to be incurred within their respective Parishes under the Control and Direction of the District Agent, and a Member of that District Committee, to whom the Inspection of such Parish or Place shall be appointed as aforesaid; and shall, at the End of every Quarter, transmit to the Treasurer of the County, and also to the Agent of the District, the Account of such Expenditure, signed and allowed by such Committee-man, and the Agent for such District.

[As the Duty of the Churchwardens and Overseers is now so much reduced by this Plan, it is apprehended the Churchwardens may be totally omitted; and in many Parishes where there are Two or more Overseers, it may be confined to One.

They are to attend the District Committee Meeting the First Monday in the Month; and also at any occasional Meetings, on Notice from the District Agent.

To send their Accounts to the District Agent, of Receipts and Payments, Two Days at least before each Committee Meeting, that he may have Time to examine them.

To deliver also an Estimate of the probable Expences of the succeeding Quarter.

To attend every Pauper who applies for Relief to the District Agent.

To pay all such Sums as shall be ordered by the District Committee or the District Agent.

To

To give no Relief without Orders, except on some sudden Emergency which does not admit of Time for Application to the District Agent, and in that Case to be afterwards allowed the Money so paid, if found reasonable.

There should be a Clause in the Act to make the Parish or Township liable for any Loss by the Insolvency of the Overseer.]

15. That there shall also be a *County* ^{County} *Committee*, consisting of a limited Number of Persons, having Freehold or Copyhold Estates of *per Annum*, to be annually chosen by Ballot by the Persons constituting the District Committees; and that the Number shall be One for every *per Annum* which the County shall pay to the Land Tax or Poor's Rate, as shall be thought most proper.

16. That the Duty of the County Committee shall be to make General Rules and Regulations for the Government of the Poor, and the several Officers and Persons entrusted with the Care and Management of them within each District:

[To appoint convenient Houses for the Reception of young Children, when of Age to receive Instruction, and capable of any Employment.

To appoint Governors for the Care of these Children, with suitable Allowances; but to employ any of the Poor Men and Women who may want Relief in that Service, if they are capable of it.

To

To receive the Accounts from each District Committee, also from the County Treasurer, Monthly; and examine them Quarterly, and allow them if approved.

To order the Number of Rates to be collected Quarterly, and certify such Orders to the District Agents, who are to proportion the Sums to be paid by each Parish and Place.

To meet at some convenient Place near the Centre of the County, in the Week next preceeding each Quarter Day, when each District Agent shall attend them.

To appoint a Treasurer at their first Meeting by Ballot, whose Duty is hereafter described; and fix a proper Salary for him not exceeding in the Pound, of the Amount of the County Rates, and to oblige him to give proper Security.

To make such other Rules and Regulations as they shall from Time to Time think fit, for carrying the Purposes of the Act into Execution, and conducting the Business of the several Officers.

To call upon each District Agent for the Returns of the Amount of the Poor's Rates within the District.

To receive Quarterly Returns from the several inferior Districts, of the Money collected and the Expences incurred therein respectively.

To examine and inspect the Accounts Quarterly.

To make Orders upon the County Treasurer for the issuing such Sums as shall be necessary to defray the Expences within each District, and to direct those Orders to the District

District Agent, who should fix the Proportion which each Parish or Place is to contribute, and certify it to the Overseer of each Parish, &c.

To direct how the working Poor are to be employed; what Manufactures shall be carried on, and what Work-houses provided; and to superintend the Buildings; to furnish and lay in Stock and Materials to be employed therein; to set all Buildings by Contract; and to choose all necessary Officers by Ballot.]

It is not the Object of this Plan to have many Persons capable of Labour kept in Work-houses; it is rather wished to have them placed or hired out to such Employments as they are most capable of; and if they cannot earn their whole Subsistence, the Deficiency to be made up out of the County Fund.

There should be a Clause in the Act to punish any Man who goes away from his Parish, and leaves his Wife or Children chargeable there, unless he shall first obtain a Certificate from the Committee or District Agent, specifying their Permission and the Cause of his Departure.

The Justices of Peace are invested with full Power to procure Indemnities to the Parish, or to punish the reputed Fathers of Bastard Children.

The Expences in apprehending such Fathers, should be paid by them, if they are able; if not, out of the County Fund.

In order to inforce the Execution of this Plan, it may be necessary to compel those to act who shall be chosen Commissioners; and also those who shall be chosen upon the County or District Committee, by inflicting Penalties on those who neglect to attend their Duty, according to a Rota to be fixed at their General Meeting, to be paid into the County Fund. But a Clause should be inserted to excuse any Person from serving as a Committeeman who desired it, after he has served Two Years.

County
Treasurer,

[The Duty of the *County Treasurer* should be to attend the Committees.

To deliver his Accounts at those Meetings to the Committee, for Inspection and Examination.

To enter the Orders made by the County Committee, and to calculate the Quota of Contribution from each District.

To call upon the District Agent for the Returns made by the Overseers, of the Payments to the Poor's Rates within the last three Years.

To procure a Plan, describing every Parish in the County, with their Situation and Contiguity to each other; and also such Townships and Places as maintain their Poor separately from the Parishes at large.]

Besides the Money to be raised for the Benefit of the Poor in each County, by the Rates

Rates in the Manner herein before described, if his Majesty and the Legislature think fit to countenance this Plan, they may do it most essentially,

By giving the Fines, Forfeitures, and Penalties which may be incurred for certain Offences, to the Encouragement of this Fund.

They may also lay a Tax upon Dogs, to be applied in its Aid.

They may also grant, for the same Purpose, additional Tolls on Turnpikes, to be paid by Persons travelling on Sundays, where not already appropriated.

The charitable Donations, which have been or may be given for the Relief and Employment of poor Persons, may be proper to be inquired into, and would add a further Increase to this Fund.

And for another addition, and as an Inducement to the Inhabitants of Parishes and Places to enforce the Vagrant Laws, and to be watchful over the Persons who intrude themselves as Inmates or Lodgers, they may inflict the following Penalties, *viz.*

On every Parish or Place where any Person convicted of Burglary or Felony was harboured at the Time the Offence was committed, and was not apprehended and prosecuted at the Parish Expence,

For Felons without Benefit of Clergy, 10*l.*

Felons with Benefit of Clergy, 5*l.*

Also the Penalties of Half those Sums on the
B Persons

Persons who harboured such Convicts in their Houses at the Time they committed the Felony;

And also a Penalty of Forty Shillings on every Parish or Place where any Person shall be found begging, and not taken into Custody and prosecuted as the Law directs, by the Officers of such Parish.

[Those Sums to be severally raised and paid by the Peace Officers of such respective Parishes or Places, out of *the Constable* or Headborough's Levies, on producing a Certificate from the Judge who convicted the Felon, or the Justice who inflicted the Penalty.]

And also various other Penalties and Forfeitures in certain other Cases, where they may be judged proper.

All which will operate both to correct Abuses and increase the Fund.

The Sums arising from the several Articles above mentioned, to be collected and received by such Persons as the County Committee shall appoint; and paid into the Hands of the County Treasurer, as an Addition to the general Fund for each County.

There are in different Parts of the Kingdom many *Clubs* or *Friendly Societies*, formed by a Number of Persons, who contribute small Weekly Sums, while in Health, to a Fund, out of which they are to be supported in Sickness and Old Age; which are very laudable
Institu-

Institutions, and merit every Encouragement that can be given them.

Sunday Schools, for the Instruction of Poor Children, have been introduced in some Parts of the Country with great Success, and seem to deserve the utmost Attention and Encouragement.

It seems expedient, therefore, that the County Committee should have Power to appropriate any Part of the last mentioned Sums for the Benefit of all or any of the said Friendly Societies, and also of the said Sunday Schools, to aid and promote their benevolent Purposes.

In the Application of the County Fund, peculiar Attention should be shewn to the Care, Education, and Employment of the poor young Children who may be proper to be sent thither, by improving their Morals, and habituating them to Labour as early as possible; and the sooner they can conveniently be taken from their Parents the better, that their Minds may not be corrupted by evil Habits and bad Example.

A convenient Number of Houses, for the Reception of these Poor Children, may be easily provided in each County, from Work-houses already built, or old deserted Mansions, without the Expence of new Buildings.

The like Means may be taken to provide comfortable Habitations for the Sick, Infirm, and Impotent Poor.

And when the Children attain a proper Age, they should be clothed and placed out as Servants or Apprentices, at the Expence of the County Fund.

Where there are not convenient Houses for the Reception of Ideots, Lunatics, and Persons disordered in their Minds, Two or Three neighbouring Counties may join, and out of these County Funds make every necessary Accommodation for those poor unfortunate Objects.

Where Districts have been already incorporated by Acts of Parliament for the Relief and Employment of their Poor, an Option may be given, either to adopt this Plan or to continue their own; and in that Case to exempt them from contributing to the County Funds.

In carrying these Purposes into Execution it may be necessary to make some particular Provisions and Variations respecting the Parishes within the Cities of London and Westminster, and Bills of Mortality, and other Cities and great Towns.

This Plan will effectually prevent all Removals from one Parish to another, in the same County. And as the Poor are to be maintained at a general County Expence (and all Counties are put into the same Situation), it may be proper to add a Clause in the Act to restrain the Removal of any Pauper to his Parish in any other County.

MR.

MR. GILBERT having been much importuned to bring forward some Plan for the Relief of the Poor, after considering the Subject in every Point of View, and trying all those Means which afforded any Prospect of Success, has formed the above Plan, which appears to him the most practicable, without exciting Jealousy, or raising popular Discontents. He is sorry he has not had Leisure to digest it more perfectly; but he was desirous of hastening it to the Press that it might receive an early Consideration.

He has studiously pursued throughout, the following great Objects, *viz.*

The making effectual Provision for the Poor, and the avoiding all Frauds and Impositions in the Application of the Money raised for their Relief and Support.

Though the Introduction of Salaries has been avoided as much as possible, in two Instances they seem to be essentially necessary, *viz.* to the County Treasurer and the District Agent. The Overseers will act, as they now do, without Pay: And it is hoped the Gentlemen of the Committees, when they have a proper Person of their own chusing to discharge the great Burthen of the Business, will cheerfully give their Attendance,

ance, and assist in so very important a Service, in which their own Interests are so particularly involved with those of their Neighbours and the Public.

Should this Plan be approved, great Care and Attention will be necessary in the Arrangement of it, and investing the necessary Powers in Hands the least likely to abuse them.

It may perhaps be thought proper to prepare the intended Bill ; and afterwards to print and circulate it during the Recess of Parliament.

It would greatly facilitate the Progress of this Plan, if a Preparatory Bill could be passed during the present Session, for the Purpose of procuring Returns from the several Parishes and Places, of the Expences attending their Poor during each of the last three Years ; from which the Medium for the Contribution is to be drawn :

And also for appointing Commissioners for forming the Districts :

And likewise for procuring Returns of the Charitable Donations for the Use of the Poor within each Parish :

As from those Returns, the two Houses of Parliament will receive very material Information to guide their Judgment upon the other most important Bill, when it comes before them the next Session.

When

When this Plan is properly settled and enforced, the Poor will have Peace and Quiet, and avoid the hardships they suffer at present whilst the Litigations about their Settlements are depending. The Magistrates, who are now forced to sacrifice a great Part of their Time to this Branch of the parochial Business, will be seldom interrupted with the Complaints of the Paupers, the Overseers who are often incompetent to judge what Sort of Relief to give them, will be freed from many disagreeable Importunities and Embarrassments, and the Rates be very considerably reduced.

There is nothing in this Plan calculated to serve any Party, or any individual Person.

There are no Powers intended to be given but such as shall be limited and secured from Abuse by every proper Check and Control.

One of the printed Copies will be sent to every Peer and Member of Parliament.

From the Magnitude of the Object, and the pressing Necessity for having some speedy Redress to so crying a Grievance; it is hoped there will be a general Concurrence in making an Experiment which appears very practicable, and promises so many Advantages to the Community, without the Hazard of any possible Danger or Inconvenience either to the Poor or to those who maintain them.

The

The Person who introduces this Plan, finding his Health will not permit him to take a laborious Part in the Business, is therefore obliged to call upon, and indeed to solicit the Exertion of the Zeal and superior Abilities of other Gentlemen to conduct and bring it to Perfection.

April 29, 1786.



OBJECTIONS

T O

Mr. GILBERT's PLAN of POLICE,

STATED and ANSWERED.

OBJECTION I. *THE Plan is too short to be intelligible upon so very extensive an Object, and stands much in need of Explanation with respect to the Mode of raising the Money, and contributing to the whole County Expences; there being a Jealousy that some Parishes which now pay but a small annual Sum to the Maintenance of their Poor, which are not numerous, will be greatly burthened with these new Salaries, and with the Poor of many great manufacturing Towns, which may increase considerably.*

C

ANSWER.

ANSWER.—The Plan was, by Design, made as short as possible, being only intended to specify its Objects, and prescribe a Mode of attaining them.

With regard to the Rates—A general equal Rate through the County was never proposed, as it must have produced much Discontent and Opposition; but the Contribution upon the Average of the last Three Years, will make the Expences of the new Salaries and House Rent, stated in Answer to the Second Objection, very inconsiderable to those Parishes which have paid but little to the Poor's Rates.

Where the Parishes are small, and but thinly inhabited, a greater Number of such will be included in forming that District, and the Rent of the House, and Salary to the Agent, will be much below the general Average, and will reduce the whole annual Sum considerably in each of such Parishes.

The same Reasoning may be applied to the Expence of the County Treasurer; a Parish which pays but a small Poor's Rate, will contribute but very little indeed to his Salary; and the like Observation holds with respect to the accidental Increase of Expences in any of the manufacturing Towns, by the Decay of Trade, &c. Every Parish will by this means, upon such an Event, contribute in the like Proportion. They would, upon such an Occasion, have been liable to have been taxed

in Aid of other distressed Parishes, under the
43 Eliz. Cap. 2. s. 3.

There will be no Occasion for minute Calculations of those Matters, as the whole will be included in the gross Sum which each Parish must pay to the County Treasurer.

When the Bill is drawn, a Table will be made, by which the *Quota* of Contribution for each Parish, to any given Sum, will appear at one View.

OBJECTION II. *That this Plan introduces many new Expences hitherto unknown upon this Subject; viz. a Salary to the District Agent; a House for him, with a Room for the Committee; and a Salary to the County Treasurer.*

ANSWER.—1st, By stating the probable Amount of those new Expences.

2^{dly}, By enumerating the Advantages which each Parish will receive under this new Plan and Regulation.

Each District is intended to consist of from Five to Ten Parishes (suppose Seven on a Medium, for the Sake of the Calculation).

The Expences to these Seven Parishes upon this Plan, supposing them in Magnitude and Importance on a Medium with all the other

Parishes in the County, will be as under (if inferior, their Contribution will be less in Proportion) :

	£.	s.	d.
For a House for the District Agent to live in, and the Committee to meet in, on a Medium about 40 <i>l. per Annum</i> , which will be to each of the Seven Parishes	5	14	3
A Salary to the District Agent, on a Medium about 50 <i>l. per Annum</i> , which will be to each Parish	7	2	10
The <i>Quota</i> to the Salary of the County Treasurer, supposing Fifty Counties, on a Medium to consist of 200 Parishes each, and the Treasurer's Salary to be on a Medium 200 <i>l. per Annum</i> , will be to each Parish	-	1	0 0

Total Expences to each Parish upon this Calculation *per Annum* 13 17 1

But if the Parishes are small, their Contribution will be greatly reduced, as appears by the Observations on the First Objection.

SAVINGS and BENEFITS which will arise from this PLAN.

EACH Parish will save the Expences of Overseers in the Execution of their Offices; those

those also of Entertainments at Meetings relative to the Poor, which are too frequent and enormous ; and also all the Expences for Law Business and Fees about Settlements, Removals, Examinations, Certificates, Orders for Maintenance, and other Proceedings respecting the Poor.

To these may be added, in many Parishes, the Salaries paid out of the Poor's Rates to Persons now hired to execute the Office of Overseer.

The above Articles *alone*, if they were selected out of the Accounts for each Parish, it is apprehended, will amount on a Medium to much more than the *Quota* of such Parish to the above Salaries and House Rent.

But should this Plan be carried into Execution according to its Spirit and Intention, it must produce infinite Savings, from the more oeconomic Management of the District Agent than the Overseer.

The *District Agent*, from the Nature of his Trust, and the Manner in which he is to be chosen, may be supposed a Person of Integrity, Ability, and great Knowledge in parochial Affairs.

Those Qualifications will enable him, under the Direction and Control of the Committee, to proceed upon the best Plan of Oeconomy which can be formed.

The following is submitted to Consideration, as pointing out in some measure the Nature of his Duty, the Substance of which is provided for, and a Register of the Proceedings directed to be kept in a Book, by the Statute 3 *W. and M. Cap. 11. s. 11.*

To enquire into the State of the Poor of each Parish within the District (having the Committee-Man, to whom the Care of such Parish is assigned, with him), and make an Entry thereof in a Book to be kept for such Parish, under the following Heads :

1st. Those who receive Pensions or weekly Pay; and to mention their Ages and Infirmities, Wife (if any), and the Number and Ages of their Children, and how they are all employed.

2^d. Those who receive occasional Relief: to enter the Observations respecting their Ages, Infirmities, and Employments.

3^d. If there is a Workhouse, to view it, and enter the Names of those who are kept there, and all the Circumstances respecting their Age and Infirmities, how long they have been there, and how they are employed.

4th. Those who have Houses provided for them, or the Rent paid by the Parish.

To lay all these Particulars before the Committee at their first Meeting, and to propose for their Consideration the best Plan which he, and the Committee-Men assigned for the particular Parishes, can devise for the Purpose; such as, *striking off unnecessary Pensions*, and *reducing others* where it can properly be done; *employing and subsisting the*
 Poor

Poor with greater OEconomy; compelling all who receive weekly Pay to wear Badges, &c. &c.

Upon all fresh Applications, which the Overseer must attend, the Agent should either order Pensions or occasional Relief; or send the Paupers to the Workhouse, or to Employment with Persons who will take the Care of them for their Labour, or for some small Allowance besides their Labour, as upon Enquiry into their Circumstances shall be thought most proper. He should also send the Children, who are fit for it, to an Hospital, which is to be provided by the County Committee for that Purpose; and the old, decrepid, and infirm Paupers, who are unfit for Labour, he should send to an Hospital, to be in like Manner provided for them.

The *Overseer* is appointed annually by the Justices of Peace; and as it is an Office of great Burden, it generally goes by House-row, in Rotation through the Parish: of course it falls upon many Persons who are ignorant of their Duty, and entirely unfit for it. Those who have Capacity and Application to acquire the requisite Knowledge, are, under the present Law, to quit their Office at the End of the Year, before they can be perfectly Masters of their Business.

If the Overseer acts upon his own Judgment, it is obvious how grossly he, and the Parish through him, may be imposed upon:

If he takes Advice, he must probably go many Miles to a Justice of Peace, and sometimes to an Attorney for it, which must be attended not only with Loss of Time to himself, but greatly increase the Parish Expence.

THE SAVINGS in the several Matters before stated, under these Regulations, are obvious, and will be experienced with Pleasure in every monthly Account. This monthly Account should be drawn out in a Form to be directed by a Schedule to the Act, and transmitted to the County Treasurer.

A further Satisfaction will arise from the Care, Employment, and placing out the poor Children, as it will enure Numbers to Labour and Industry, who would otherwise have been trained up in Idleness, Theft, or Vagrancy.

OBJECTION III. *That the Justices of Peace seem to be overlooked in this Plan, no Authority being given to them in the Execution of it.*

ANSWER.—As the principal Persons who are to have Power under the Authority of the
new

new intended Act, are to be elected by Ballot, it is not doubted but many Gentlemen in the Commission of the Peace, who are esteemed and respected in the Country, will be chosen upon the County, and also upon the District Committees, which will be invested with all the Powers that the Justices had before, in ordering and directing Relief and Maintenance for the Poor; and one of the Justices within the District should be appointed Chairman, and preside at those Committees.

The Power which was given to Justices of Peace, by the 43d *Eliz.* and other Acts, to appoint Overseers of the Poor, to allow Rates, and compel the Payment of them; and also the Powers given in Cases of Bastardy, by 18 *Eliz.* Cap. 3. 7 *Jas.* I. Cap. 4. and 6 *Geo.* II. Cap. 31. still remain, and are intended to continue in them; but the Powers with which they are invested by Acts 3 *W. & M.* Cap. 11. and 9 *Geo.* I. Cap. 7. to hear the Complaints of Paupers, and to order Relief, &c. &c. are proposed to be invested in the District Clerk and Committee only.

That Power, so diffused, it is apprehended, will be better and more easily executed, than if it were to remain to be exercised by an individual Justice of Peace; and probably, most of the Justices in every County will be better pleased with this Alteration; as those Matters respecting the hearing and determining

determining Complaints between the Parish Officers and the Poor, are certainly the most irksome and disagreeable Part of their Duty ; and as their Duty has been much increased by the late Revenue and other Acts, some Means seem necessary to be adopted, in order to relieve them as much as possible in the other Parts of it.

OBJECTION IV. *That this Plan, however well meant and wisely adapted, will fail in the Execution, as Gentlemen qualified for the Office of Committee-Men, will not give themselves the Trouble to act ; and that to compel them to act by Penalties, will be repugnant to the Idea of Liberty.*

ANSWER.—The Regulations proposed by this Plan are so loudly called for through the whole Kingdom, that there is little Doubt of its being eagerly embraced by the Country Gentlemen, even without Compulsion.

That in a Matter of such high Importance to the State, and to the Police of the Country, there will be nothing improper or unconstitutional in Compulsion by Penalties, after Gentlemen have been chosen by the People of Property by Ballot, and have fixed, at a Meeting amongst themselves (which they should be required to hold), their Rota of Duty, respecting the Attendances on the Committee-days ;

days ; for which a *Quorum* should be settled by the Act.

Compulsion by Penalties is not a new Mode, as by the 43d of *Eliz.* Cap. 2. s. 10. (the great Act for establishing Provisions for the Poor), a Clause is inserted, to levy Penalties upon Justices of Peace, for refusing or neglecting to act in the Appointment of Overseers of the Poor ; and no Doubt other Instances of a similar Kind may be found.

OBJECTION V. *That in many Districts it will be difficult to find a sufficient Number of proper Persons to constitute the Committee.*

ANSWER.—In forming the Districts, such contiguous Parishes may in every Situation be united, as will comprehend within them a sufficient Number of Persons qualified for Committee-Men. It is not doubted but many respectable Clergymen will be elected, and ready to act upon those Committees, when they shall be wanted. Their Services and Exertions, upon such an Occasion, will be very pleasing to the Country ; and such of them who may happen to be but moderately provided for in the Church, cannot fail, by their Zeal and Attention to so very laudable an Employment, to excite the Notice, and to merit the Patronage of Gentlemen, who either have, or can procure Church Preferments for them.

OBJEC-

OBJECTION VI. *That as by this Plan the Poor will be maintained at a County Expence, those who have the Application of the Money will be more profuse in the Distribution of it.*

ANSWER.—The District Agent is the Person who must be responsible; And when we consider the Manner in which he is to be elected, and the good Opinion which those who chuse him have of his Honesty; that he holds a beneficial Employment only during his good Behaviour, for which he is to find Sureties; and that his Accounts and his Conduct will be under the Check and Controul, not only of the District Committee, but of the Treasurer and County Committee, there does not seem the least Probability of his being guilty of any Fraud or Abuse of his Trust, so as to deter Gentlemen from adopting the Measure of the Poor being maintained at a general County Expence. On the contrary, there are many cogent Reasons to induce them to it; *viz.*

1st, It will most effectually put an End to all Contentions and Expences about Settlements and Removal of Paupers.

2^{dly}, It will furnish an easy Means of pursuing and apprehending any Person who may run away, and leave his Family, or his Bastard Child, a Charge on the Parish; by sending a Hue and Cry, with a Description of
of

of his Person, from District to District through the County, as it will be the Interest of every one to assist in detecting him; and this Hue and Cry may be pursued from County to County throughout the Kingdom, till he is apprehended: The Mode of doing this, with great Facility, may be established in the Bill.

OBJECTION VII. *This Plan of Police, as it is called, does not point out any complete Remedy for putting an End to Vagrancy, and the pernicious Evils attending it.*

ANSWER.—It is admitted this Plan only takes up that Part of the Vagrant Law which incidentally falls under some of the Provisions about the Poor; but it is hoped a complete Vagrant Bill will attend this Poor Bill through the Two Houses of Parliament the next Session.

A general Act for providing and improving the Houses of Correction throughout the Kingdom (most necessary for carrying those Plans into Execution) has already passed; and, in the Course of the present Year, great Progress will probably be made in those Buildings.

OBJECTION VIII. *That there is no Provision made for repealing any of the present Poor*

Poor Laws, which will class very much with this new Plan.

ANSWER.—A minute Inspection and Revision of the present Poor Laws is intended; but there has not yet been Time to digest it perfectly; nor can it properly be done, till it is known in what Degree this Plan will receive the Countenance and Approbation of Parliament. It is evident, however, that if the whole be adopted and established, it will be necessary that a considerable Number of the present Acts relative to Settlements, Removals, Appeals, Certificates, Churchwardens, and Orders of Justices for Relief, be totally repealed; and that others respecting Bastard Children, Rates, Workhouses, Apprentices, Overseers, and Justices of Peace, be revised and considered; and so much of them as shall be deemed proper to be continued, digested and reduced into one Act.

By these Means the Statutes respecting the Poor, which are now about Thirty in Number, will be comprised in one Act, and the annual Expence of maintaining and providing for the Poor, which is now about Two Millions and a Half, will probably, by an Adherence to this Plan, in a few Years be reduced to Half a Million, and in Time totally annihilated; as by a more regular and constant Employment, which is now to be introduced and enforced, and a proper Application

cation of the various Charities given to the Poor, they may be subsisted with more Credit and Comfort to themselves, as they now are in the neighbouring Kingdoms, and were formerly in this, by their Labour, and the voluntary Contribution of benevolent Persons.

GENERAL OBSERVATIONS.

IF the General System of this Plan, with such Alterations and Improvements as may be found necessary, should be adopted by Parliament; it may be frustrated in its Execution, unless some very effectual Means be used, and a close Attention paid to its Introduction and Progress in every County. To secure which, it may be thought proper, after the Forms for keeping the Accounts, and making Returns, shall be settled, to have Returns from the Treasurer to be appointed for every County, made quarterly, half yearly, or annually, as may be judged most expedient, to a proper Person in *London*, perfectly acquainted with the Business; who should receive, examine, and digest them, in such Order, that they may be inspected with the greatest Ease by any Gentleman who may be disposed to see how the Business is conducted;
the

the person so to be employed ought to correspond with the County Treasurers, or the District Agent where any Disorder or Defect shall appear, in order that the same may be laid by them before the respective Committees.

And if approved, he may also prepare an Abstract of the whole, to be printed quarterly, half yearly, or annually, as may be thought fit, and laid before Parliament, that the Public at large may be fully acquainted with these Proceedings (the *Quota* of Expences for which cannot be many Shillings *per Annum* to each Parish).

This Plan, which is confessedly great and extensive, in many respects makes an entire Alteration in the present System of the Poor Laws, and, from its Magnitude, may at first Sight suggest more Doubts and Difficulties than it is hoped will appear on a fuller Investigation; but it is intended to effect a radical Cure to an Evil that is most generally and grievously complained of. And as a Matter of such a serious and delicate Nature cannot succeed, and have the wished-for happy Effects, without a very general Concurrence among all Orders and Classes of Men; the Plan itself having been already distributed to the several Members of the Two Houses of Parliament, it is proposed that the same Method shall be pursued with respect to these Objections and Answers; after which the whole

is intended to be submitted to the Public at the small Expence of a Sixpenny Pamphlet, that the Measure may have the fullest Consideration before the next Session of Parliament.

It is essentially necessary that a Bill should pass this Session for procuring Returns from the Overseers of every Parish and Place maintaining its own Poor; of the Expences occasioned on their Account within each of the last Three Years; and also another Bill for a Return from the Ministers and Churchwardens, of all charitable Donations given for the Benefit of the Poor within their respective Parishes: such Bills, it is not doubted, will meet with a general Concurrence and Support in both Houses.

Before this or any other Plan for improving the Police respecting the Poor can be perfected and carried into Execution, it seems requisite that the Counties should be divided into convenient Districts, as the parochial Divisions will be found much too small for enforcing all the necessary Regulations, without loading them with too great an Expence; but it seems premature to determine in what Manner, and of what Extent these Districts should be formed, till a Plan has been considered and approved by Parliament.

May 13, 1786.

THOS GILBERT.

D

is intended to be submitted to the Public at the
the all experience of a sixpenny pamphlet that
the literature may use the other Consider-
ation before the House of Parliament.
It is essentially a Bill that a Bill should
pass the Session, a preceding Roman from
the Orders of every House and these main-
taining its own right of the experience occu-
tioned on their account within each of the last
three years, and a second Bill for a Re-
turn from the Members and Churchwardens
of all charitable Bishops given for the Be-
nefit of the poor of their respective Pa-
rishes: And Bill, it is not doubted, will meet
with a general Concurrence and Support in
both Houses.

But this or any other plan for improving the Police requires the Poor can be regulated and directed into Education, it seems requisite that the Poor should be divided into convenient districts, as the parochial divisions will be found much too small for enforcing all the necessary regulations, without loading them with too great an expense, but it seems necessary to determine in what manner, and of what extent these districts should be formed, this Plan has been considered and approved by Parliament.

THOS GILBERT.

Д

